

Picnicking is allowed and tables are located near Lake Taneycomo.

Trails are available for hiking, nature study, photography and wildlife viewing near the conservation center.

Fishing is permitted year-round in Lake Taneycomo. Fishing access areas and a public boat launch can be found on the area. Anglers are required to have a Missouri Fishing Permit, except Missouri residents 65 years of age and older and persons 15 years of age or younger. A trout permit is required to fish above the Hwy 65 bridge. **Please consult the Wildlife Code Book for special regulations regarding size, species, permits, and bait on various portions of Lake Taneycomo.**

Special Area Rules and Regulations

- Fishing is not allowed in the hatchery facility or the three outlets specified on the area map.
- No free-running pets. Dogs must be leashed at all times.
- No hunting is permitted on the area.
- No littering.
- Fires and fireworks are prohibited.
- Camping is not permitted.
- Horses, bicycles and motorized vehicles are not allowed off the road.
- Destroying, cutting or removing vegetation, including wildflowers, is prohibited. Nuts, berries, fruits, mushrooms and wild greens may be taken for personal consumption only.
- Area is closed to trapping.

*This hatchery was acquired in part through the
Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act
administered by the
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*



Hatchery Conservation Center Schedule

The Conservation Center is open daily from 9:00am to 5:00pm. Open hours are extended from Memorial Day until Labor Day. The Conservation Center is closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Nearby Department Areas:

Busiek State Forest & Wildlife Area
Ruth & Paul Henning Conservation Area
Drury Mincy Conservation Area
Boston Ferry Conservation Area
Springfield Conservation Nature Center

From Branson, take Highway 165 southwest 6 miles to the hatchery near Table Rock Dam.

For local information, contact:

Missouri Department of Conservation
Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery
483 Hatchery Road
Branson, MO 65616
(417) 334-4865 ext. 0

*Additional area information is posted on bulletin boards
located in parking areas and area offices.*

6/2014

(Regulations are from the Wildlife Code of Missouri and selected statutes of the State of Missouri. Special area regulations are in Chapter 11 of the Wildlife Code. A free printed copy of the Wildlife Code, which lists most area regulations, is available from the Conservation Department. Chapter 11 in its entirety is available at www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/3csr/3csr.asp.) Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (573) 751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.

Shepherd of the Hills

FISH HATCHERY



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery

About this Area

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery is the largest trout-rearing facility operated by the Missouri Department of Conservation. It is located 6 miles southwest of Branson, on Missouri Highway 165 just below Table Rock Dam.

The hatchery includes a conservation center, where the public can learn more about trout culture, aquatic life, fishing, and the Missouri Department of Conservation's role in aquatic resource management. The center is open throughout the year and is free of charge.

Trails are available near the hatchery for hiking and wildlife viewing. They also provide fishing access.

The Hatchery

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery produces between 350,000 and 400,000 pounds of trout each year. Both rainbow and brown trout are raised at the hatchery with 80% of production going into Lake Taneycomo. The remainder of the fish are stocked into other Missouri trout management areas or transferred to Missouri's trout parks.

Construction of the hatchery began in 1957 and production of trout in 1958 with the completion of Table Rock Dam by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This dam created a large, deep lake that varies in water temperature from surface to bottom. The water near the bottom stays cool, averaging 48 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. During hydroelectric generation, this cold water is released into Lake Taneycomo. Although the cold water release caused the loss of the native warm-water fishery, it created the ideal environment for trout, a fish that thrives at low water temperatures.

Area Features

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery lies in the historic and biologically rich White

River Valley. Trails on the hatchery grounds lead visitors through a variety of natural settings, from the shoreline of Lake Taneycomo to the high rocky bluffs overlooking the famed White River.

A wide diversity of plant life can be found near the hatchery. Along the stream bank, bottom-land species like sycamore, burr oak, paw paw and spicebush thrive, as do wildflowers such as bluebells, cardinal flowers and violets. The forested area adjacent to the visitor center is mainly oak and hickory trees, with scattered stands of short-leaf pine and eastern cedar. Springtime offers a colorful display of flowering trees such as wild plum, serviceberry, redbud and dogwood.

The rocky bluffs overlooking Lake Taneycomo support glade species like the smoke tree and the rare Ashe's juniper, which is found only in the Ozarks and one other area of the United States. Native prairie grasses and broad-leaved plants like coreopsis, black-eyed susan, purple coneflower, Missouri primrose and prickly pear cactus cover the glades.

The hatchery area is also home to a variety of wildlife including deer, turkey, squirrel, raccoon, fox, mink, muskrat, and beaver. On the glades, you might even catch a glimpse of the collard lizard or "Mountain Boomer".

To help protect these wildlife species, habitat improvement projects are ongoing at the hatchery. Wildlife food plots and shelter-producing trees and shrubs have been planted. Brush piles have been established for smaller animals and reptiles.

Missouri's state bird, the eastern bluebird, is often seen around the hatchery, as are fish predators like the great blue heron, green heron and belted kingfisher. Winter bird visitors include gulls, osprey and bald eagles. Turkey vultures and black vultures have a winter roost near the boat launch. Red-shouldered hawks, pileated woodpeckers and numerous songbirds call this area home.

Hatchery Facts

- Both rainbow (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and brown (*Salmo trutta*) are raised in the hatchery.

- Shepherd of the Hills hatchery is the only facility in Missouri that raises brown trout for distribution statewide.
- Brown trout broodstock are taken each year from Lake Taneycomo via fish ladder.
- Approximately 1,200,000 fish are raised each year.
- Eggs are taken from female rainbow trout during spring and fall spawns. Brown trout eggs are taken during a winter spawn. Milt (sperm) is taken from male trout and mixed with eggs to fertilize them. This process is done in the spawning building, a facility specially designed for this purpose.
- Fertilized eggs are then moved to the hatchery building and placed in egg jars. Eggs are supplied with a continual flow of cold water. In two weeks, eyes will develop and in one month the eggs hatch and are called sac fry.
- Small trout continue to grow and are fed a commercially processed trout food. After 18 months of meticulous care, 11-inch trout are ready for stocking Lake Taneycomo.
- Water to operate the hatchery flows from the lower level of Table Rock Lake through an 18-inch pipeline, delivering approximately 14 million gallons of water per day. Well water is used to supplement lake water inside the hatchery building.

Things To Do

Exhibits describe trout spawning, egg development and rearing techniques. Other nature-related exhibits are changed seasonally.

Aquariums allow visitors a chance to view trout "eye to eye" and get a close-up look at native Ozark fish.

Multi-media presentations, including the introductory film "Ozark Rainbows", can be seen in the 50-seat auditorium.

Guided tours of the hatchery facility originate at the conservation center lobby on weekdays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Tours begin at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. A self-guided tour is available during the remainder of the year.